

**Abstract of the Invention**

An improved printing press includes a tubular-shaped printing blanket removably disposed on a blanket cylinder rotatably supported by a frame and having an outer circumferential surface. The printing blanket is disposed in rolling engagement with a conventional printing plate disposed on a plate cylinder having an axially extending gap in which opposite ends of the printing plate are secured. The printing blanket is removed by opening a portion of the frame and axially sliding the printing blanket off of the blanket cylinder. The blanket cylinder has passages which deliver a stream of air to the outer surface of the blanket cylinder which expands the inner circumferential surface of the printing blanket so that the blanket can be axially removed or inserted onto the blanket cylinder. The printing blanket has a metal inner surface which is tensioned by the blanket cylinder to retain the printing blanket on the blanket cylinder during operation of the press. The printing blanket is at least partially formed of a compressible material.

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